



Alternate Assessment

Eligibility

Assessment Workshop

Winter 2022

Agenda

- Welcome
- Significant Cognitive Student
- Eligibility Decision Criteria
- Student Examples
- Resources



Eligibility for the Alternate Assessment

- Why?
 - Making sure to use the right assessment for each student
 - ESSA 1% participation requirement
 - We are below the 1% requirements
 - Need to remain diligent in ensuring that student are taking the appropriate assessment

Which students are eligible for the Alternate Assessment?





USING THE LEAST DANGEROUS ASSUMPTION IN EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS

The *least dangerous assumption* was first proposed by Donnellan (1984)

Indicated much earlier that teacher expectations could influence student achievement.



THE LEAST DANGEROUS ASSUMPTION

CHRIS BUGAJ
REGISTRY TECHNOLOGY TRAINER



What does this mean?

Anne suggested that if a student does not make progress, we should first assume it is due to a problem with the instruction or materials rather than a student deficit.

INCLUSIONEVOLUTION.COM



WHICH IS THE LEAST DANGEROUS ASSUMPTION?

We assumed he could learn, so we gave him every opportunity. And it turns out he couldn't

VS.

We assumed he could NOT learn, so we did not give him the opportunity. But it turns out he COULD learn

source: Anne Donnellan, 1984

- Information presented taken from the Alt Assessment Participation guidance document
- <https://doe.sd.gov/Assessment/documents/Alt-Guidelines-20.pdf>

Guidance for IEP Teams on Participation Decisions on the Alternate Assessment of South Dakota Content Standards

South Dakota Department of Education
08/29/2019

Significant Cognitive Disability

- Significant Cognitive Disability
 - Not a separate category of disability
 - A designation given to a small number of students
 - TYPICALLY has IQ of 55 or below
 - Needs adaptive behavior skills

Core Content Connectors

- Things IEP teams need to think about:
 - For students with significant cognitive disabilities struggling to access the State Content Standards, a “bridge” called the Core Content Connectors (CCC) are available.
 - Core content connectors:
 - Divide the State Standards into smaller pieces
 - Don’t cover the full breadth of any State Content Standard
 - Allow access to grade level standards
 - Should be used to align intermediate goals on IEPs.

- Teachers and IEP teams
 - Need to consider which are appropriate for the student to use:
 - South Dakota Content Standards or
 - Core Content Connectors
 - What is used to guide the development of appropriate academic goals
 - To provide maximum engagement with the general curriculum and typical peers with appropriate
 - adaptations,
 - simplifications, and
 - modifications to grade-level materials and content

Participation and Eligibility Decisions

- Step 1: Understanding the Eligibility Criteria for Alternate Assessments
- Step 2: Gathering Evidence
- Step 3: Documenting the Decision



All three of the following eligibility criteria must be met before a student can participate in the alternate assessment...

State/District-wide Assessment Accommodations

Assessment

- ☐ Student will be taking state and district-wide assessments with or without accommodations.
- ☐ Student will be taking state and district-wide alternate assessments (The alternate assessment is for students working in the alternate achievement standards) (Annual goal and short-term objectives required)
 - a. Does the student meet the significant cognitive disability criteria? (If no, student is not eligible to take the alternate assessment) ☐ Yes ☐ No
 - b. Explain the reason why the student cannot participate in the regular assessment.
 - c.

Explain the reason why the alternate assessment selected is appropriate for this student.

Understanding the Eligibility Requirements

1. The student has a significant cognitive disability.

- Does student have a disability, or disabilities, that significantly impacts cognitive function and adaptive behavior?
 - Review of student records and other evidence indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that prevent the student from meaningful participation in the standard academic core curriculum or achievement of the standards at their enrolled grade level.
 - Depends on others for many, and sometimes all, daily living needs, and requires extensive ongoing support in adulthood.

2. The student is learning content linked to (derived from) South Dakota state content standards).

- Goals and instruction for this student
 - adapted to reflect the enrolled South Dakota Content Standards grade-level CCCs and
 - address knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for this student.
- Life and job skills are also embedded and included as part of the student's instruction and may provide the context for access to the standards.



- 3. The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade-and age-appropriate curriculum.**
- Demonstrated cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior is significantly below age expectations, even with program modifications, adaptations, and accommodations.
 - Impacts academic, life, and job skills in home, school, and community.
 - Covers the three aspects of learning:
 - ***What the student needs in order to learn.***
 - Student **requires** extensive, repeated, individualized instruction and supports from teachers and other professionals.
 - ***The types of materials required in order for the student to learn.***
 - Materials significantly modified, customized, and adapted to facilitate understanding.
 - ***How the student demonstrates their learning.***
 - Substantial supports needed to achieve gains in the grade-and-age-appropriate curriculum
 - Requires substantially adapted materials and customized methods of accessing information in alternate ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate, and transfer skills

Think About

- The conversation around determining whether or not a student meets the criteria for eligibility is an important one.
 - It drives the daily and long-term instruction as they prepare for options after high school.
 - It's paramount that students be engaged in the general education curriculum with appropriate modifications and the highest and most rigorous instruction appropriate.
 - If we fall short of this goal, we risk shortchanging and second-guessing a student's ability to achieve academically as well as in other areas such as life and job skills.

Participation and Eligibility Decisions

- Step 1: Understanding the Eligibility Criteria for Alternate Assessments
- **Step 2: Gathering Evidence**
- Step 3: Documenting the Decision

Step 2: Gathering Evidence

- Two reasons for using multiple pieces of evidence to inform this decisions:
 - Prevents decision-making that relies on one type of evidence (e.g., IQ score or disability category)
 - Provides a complete picture of the student both academically and in social settings
 - Shouldn't be based on opinion or empathy

Sources of evidence and data

- **Curriculum, instructional, and classroom evidence:**
 - Examples instructional objectives and materials
 - Work samples and data on progress from both school- and community-based instruction
 - Classroom work samples and data
 - Teacher observations
 - Progress monitoring data
- **Assessment data and evidence:**
 - Past state assessments to compare to classroom work
 - District-wide assessments
 - Reading assessments and any other academic achievement tests
 - Language assessments like ACCESS for ELLs or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs
 - Results of the initial or most recent evaluations of the student
 - Observations by teachers and other service providers as well as family and guardians
- **IEP information including:**
 - Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, goals, and short-term objectives or post-school outcomes from the IEP
 - Considerations for students with specific communication needs or modes (from multiple data sources)
 - Considerations for students who may be learning English as a second or other language (i.e., English language learners)

It is not based on...

- A disability category or label
- Expected poor performance on the general education assessment
- Administrator decision
- Need for accommodations (e.g., assistive technology/AAC) to participate in assessment process)
- Anticipated disruptive behavior and/or emotional duress
- Impact of student scores on accountability system
- Low reading level/achievement level
- Poor attendance or extended absences
- Native language/social/cultural or economic difference
- Academic and other services student receives
- Educational environment or instructional setting
- Percent of time receiving special education services
- English Learner (EL) status



Participation and Eligibility Decisions

- Step 1: Understanding the Eligibility Criteria for Alternate Assessments
- Step 2: Gathering Evidence
- Step 3: Documenting the Decision

Step 3: Document the Decision

- Two possible documents to use:
 - Alternate Assessment worksheet
 - Documentation of Evidence Worksheet

• Alt Assessment Worksheet

[AltAsmtWks-19.docx \(live.com\)](#)

South Dakota's Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines

The criteria for participation in the alternate assessment reflect the pervasive nature of a significant cognitive disability. All content areas should be considered when determining who should participate in this assessment. Thus, a student who participates in the alternate assessment participates in this assessment for all content areas.

In addition, evidence for the decision for participating in the Multi State Alternate Assessment is NOT BASED on:

1. A disability category or label
2. Poor attendance or extended absences
3. Native language/social/cultural or economic difference
4. Expected poor performance on the general education assessment
5. Academic and other services student receives
6. Educational environment or instructional setting
7. Percent of time receiving special education services
8. English Language Learner (ELL) status
9. Low reading level/achievement level
10. Anticipated disruptive behavior
11. Impact of student scores on accountability system
12. Administrator decision
13. Anticipated emotional duress
14. Need for accommodations (e.g., assistive technology/AAC) to participate in assessment process)

Participation Criteria	Participation Criteria Descriptors	Agree (Yes) or Disagree (No)? Provide documentation for each
1. The student has a significant cognitive disability	Review of student records indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. <i>*Adaptive behavior is defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life.</i>	Yes / No
2. The student is learning content linked to (derived from) the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)	Goals and instruction listed in the IEP for this student are linked to the enrolled grade level CCSS and address knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for this student.	Yes / No
3. The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade-and age-appropriate curriculum	The student (a) requires extensive, repeated, individualized instruction and support that is not of a temporary or transient nature and (b) uses substantially adapted materials and individualized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate, and transfer skills across multiple settings.	Yes / No

The student is eligible to participate in the Alternate Assessment only if all responses above are marked Yes

Student Name: _____ DOB: _____

SSID: _____ IEP Meeting Date: _____

Documentation of Evidence Worksheet

This worksheet is designed to help IEP Teams match evidence to the specific criteria in order to help make decisions. It is not a required part of the decision-making process. If used, attach to the Eligibility Form.

- Documentation of Evidence Worksheet
- [DocEviden.docx \(live.com\)](#)

Eligibility Criteria	Write Description of Documentation and Evidence Below	Sources of Evidence (check if used)
<p>1. Student has a disability that significantly impacts cognitive function and adaptive behavior*</p> <p>*Adaptive behavior is defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life.</p> <p>YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/></p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Results of individual and group administered achievement tests</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Results of informal assessments</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Results of individual reading assessments</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Results of district-wide alternate assessments</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Results of language assessments including English language learner (ELL) language assessments if applicable</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:</p>
<p>2. The student's instruction is aligned to the South Dakota Content Standards in ELA, Math, and Science but is adapted to reflect the knowledge and skills in the Core Content Connectors.</p> <p>YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/></p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives and materials including work samples</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals and objectives from the IEP</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Data from scientific research-based interventions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Progress monitoring data</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:</p>
<p>3. The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade-and age-appropriate curriculum</p> <p>YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/></p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives, and materials including work samples from both school and community based instruction.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Teacher collected data and checklists</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals, and objectives, and post school outcomes from the IEP</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Transition Plan for students age 16 or younger, if</p>

If Decision is Yes

- If the IEP team determines that the student is eligible,
 - Within the IEP: In the assessment section (a, b, & c)
 - Complete the Evidence Based Worksheet or the Alternate Assessment Worksheet
 - attach a copy to the IEP
 - **Complete this form each year at the time of the IEP annual review.**
 - *This must also be documented for students participating in districtwide assessment(s)*

Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> Student will be taking state and district-wide assessments with or without accommodations.
<input type="checkbox"/> Student will be taking state and district-wide alternate assessments (The alternate assessment is for students working in the alternate achievement <u>standards</u>) (Annual goal and short term objectives required) <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Does the student meet the significant cognitive disability criteria? (If no, student is not eligible to take the alternate assessment) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Nob. Explain the reason why the student cannot participate in the regular assessment. <div></div>c. Explain the reason why the alternate assessment selected is appropriate for this student. <div></div>
<input type="checkbox"/> No state and/or district-wide assessments are required at this student's grade level during the course of this annual IEP.

If Decision is *No*

- IEP team decides that the student is **not eligible**, then three things must happen:
 - Student will participate in the state's general assessments with appropriate accommodations as determined by the IEP team.
 - Instruction is aligned to the State Standards via the general education curriculum.
 - Will not be able to learn the academic skills and knowledge assessed on the state's general assessments without access to the general education curriculum
 - Record of the decision must be recorded with the PPWN
 - Evidence Based Worksheet or Alternate Assessment Worksheet **may be** completed
 - attached to the IEP and
 - placed in the student's file



CORE CONTENT CONNECTORS

Understanding Content Connectors



Are not a curriculum



Are not intended to
define HOW we teach



Do not define services
provided



Standards drive
instruction



Understanding Content Connectors



To bridge content and learning progressions



To identify salient grade-level content



To identify essential skills and knowledge



To be used instructionally to “fill in gaps” in understanding



To prepare students for learning at the next grade level

- <https://doe.sd.gov/speid/instructionalSCD.aspx>

- NCSC Wiki (for the ELA and Math CCCs)
 - Curriculum Resources (to find the CCCs)
- Science Content Standard with CCCs

https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Main_Page

+ [ELA and Math Core Content Connectors \(CCCs\): NCSC Web Based Resources](#)

- [Science Content Standard with Core Content Connectors \(CCCs\)](#)

Science Content Standard with Core Content Connectors (CCCs)

Grade Span	High School	Middle school	K-5 Elementary
Presentation	High School	Middle School (6-8)	K-5 (Elementary)
	Standard Presentation(12/18)	Standard Presentation(12/18)	Standard Presentation(12/18)
Standards	High School Science with CCC (2017)	Grades 6-8 Science with CCC (2017)	Grade K-5 Science with CCC (2017)

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significant cognitive disabilities. Using the [Learning Progressions Frameworks](#) Core Content Connectors. The Core Content Connectors Modules that present specific content across grade bands.

Contents [hide]

- 1 Common Core State Standards
- 2 Learning Progressions Frameworks
- 3 Graduated Understandings
- 4 Core Content Connectors
- 5 Content Modules
- 6 Sample Items

Common Core State Standards

Learning Progressions Frameworks

The Learning Progressions Frameworks (LPF) were designed on research that describes how understanding of core concepts and frameworks offer a guide for the development of curriculum.

Graduated Understandings



STUDENT EXAMPLES

Student Example 1

13 years old and uses an augmentative communication device with voice and print output to take part in classroom discussions and activities, as well as to participate in assessments. Primary disability diagnosis is autism.

- **READING:** Reads using large print version of text; can answer some basic comprehension questions at grade level; has trouble with drawing conclusions or making inferences after reading; prefers to be read to; can read simplified text and text at the 3rd grade level
- **WRITING:** Can write simple stories with a beginning, middle, and end; use of details is limited; fast/slow, light/dark, tall/short, loud/soft, etc; visual impairments results in needing more time to complete writing assignments causing frustration
- **MATHEMATICS:** Requires a calculator for all math calculations; can get the correct answer by following step-by-step directions; requires being reminded often about some basic numeracy concepts eg. multiplication and division
- **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:** Very adept at using a computer and/or iPad to download videos and to play games and music; severe anxiety; requires extensive coaching, prompting, and breaks; any testing requires several days to complete; severe Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) contributes to testing cannot be completed; test results may not reflect this student's true knowledge and abilities

1. Student has a disability that significantly impacts cognitive function and adaptive behavior*

– What evidence did you use?

- Can answer basic comprehension questions at grade level but has trouble drawing conclusions
- Prefers to be read to
- Can write simple stories with a beginning, middle and use of limited detail
- Can get correct answer for math calculations with use of a calculator
- OCD prevents completion of testing which may not reflect true knowledge and abilities
- Adept at using a computer and iPad

* Adaptive behavior is defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life

2. The student's instruction is aligned to the South Dakota Content Standards in ELA, Math, and Science but is adapted to reflect he knowledge and skills in the Core Content Connectors.
 - What evidence did you use?
 - Can answer some basic comprehension questions at grade level but has trouble drawing conclusion
 - Requires calculator for all math calculations and can get the correct answer by following formulaic directions
 - Needs reminders often about some basic numeracy concepts

3. The student required extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade-and-age appropriate curriculum.
- What does the evidence say?
 - Can get correct answer by following step-by-step directions
 - Requires being reminded about some basic numeracy concepts
 - Requires extensive coaching, prompting, modeling, and breaks

Yes or No

1. Student has a disability that significantly impacts cognitive function and adaptive behavior
2. The student's instruction is aligned to the South Dakota Content Standards in ELA, Math, and Science but is adapted to reflect his knowledge and skills in the Core Content Connectors.
3. The student required extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade-and-age appropriate curriculum.



COMMON ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Question

- If the IEP team decides student annual goals will align to CCCs, the student automatically qualifies for the alternate assessment (MSAA/SDSA)

Answer

- No, student would not **automatically** qualify.
- Student still must meet all 3 alternate assessment criteria.
- CCC are developed to be components of regular ELA, Math or Science standards.
- Level 4 students may be advancing toward the full general education standards.

Question

- Student has a cognitive disability. She struggles academically and utilizes modifications on general content standards.
- If we write annual goals to CCC, student qualifies for alternate assessment.

Answer

- No, if student can access the general content standards, then should take the general assessment with accommodations.
- **Unless** the modification have become so significant and it appears they are accessing CCC instead, then student **could** qualify if meet the significant discrepancy and has data to support it.



THIS 'N THAT

Alternate Accommodations

- Assistive Technology
- Paper Version
- Scribe
- Sign Language
- Large Print
- Braille

Accommodations and Modifications			
Accommodations/Modifications/Supplementary Aides and Services	Frequency	Location	Duration
1. <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
2. <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
3. <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
4. <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

State Assessment Accommodations		
Smarter Balanced ELA (Gr 3-8 & 11): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Test: <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	Smarter Balanced Math (Gr 3-8 & 11): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Test: <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	Dakota STEP Science (Gr 5, 8 & 11): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Test: <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

* MSAA (ELA and Math) Assessment and South Dakota Science Alternate (SDS-A)
 Accommodations for both instruction and assessment must be documented.

- Must be written into the IEP on the Instructional and Statewide Section
- All others are embedded within the assessment platform

- If yes, student will take the alternate assessment,
- Staff notify the district Infinite Campus person
 - In the enrollment tab
 - Check the box “Participate in the Alt Assessment”

Summary **Enrollments** Flags Assessment Behavior Graduation Records Transfer

☐ Title 1 Reading
 ☐ Title 1 Supporting Guidance
 ☐ Title 1 Social Science
 ☐ Title 1 Science

☐ Title 1 Vocational
 ☐ Title 1 Health/Dental/Eye Care
 ☐ Title 1 Math

Special Ed Fields

* Effective Date	Special Ed Program	Special Ed Category
08/24/2017		
	Primary Disability	Multiple Disability 1
	Multiple Disability 2	Multiple Disability 3
	Multiple Disability 4	Multiple Disability 5

Recreational Therapy Hours
 Speech/Language Therapy Hours
 Orientation Mobility Hours
 Other Service Hours
 Assistive Technology
 ASD Severity Communication Level

Social Work Service Hours
 Transportation
 ASD Severity Behaviors Level

Audiological Services Hours
 School Health Services Hours
 Counseling Services Hours

☒ Participates in Alt. Assessment

Used for the
Assessment Pull

Resources

- <https://doe.sd.gov/assessment/alternate.aspx>
 - Guidance for IEP Teams on Participation on the Alternate Assessment
 - Alt Assessment Worksheet
 - Documentation of Evidence Worksheet
 - Instructional Supports for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Instructional Supports for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

- <https://doe.sd.gov/sped/instructionalSCD.aspx>
 - NCSC Wiki (for the ELA and Math CCCs)
 - Curriculum Resources (to find the CCCs)
 - Science Content Standard with CCCs

+ [ELA and Math Core Content Connectors \(CCCs\): NCSC Web Based Resources](#)

– [Science Content Standard with Core Content Connectors \(CCCs\)](#)

Science Content Standard with Core Content Connectors (CCCs)

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Curriculum Resources

The NCSC GSEG intends to provide quality curriculum resources for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Using the [Learning Progressions Frameworks](#), [Core Content Connectors](#). The Core Content Connectors (CCC) are [Content Modules](#) that present specific content across grade bands.

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- 1 Common Core State Standards
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Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities

- TIES Center recently published a resource, titled *Using the Least Dangerous Assumption in Educational Decisions*. There has been insufficient research to date to know what students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are able to do when given the opportunity to learn rigorous content while provided with appropriate supports. The least dangerous assumption holds that in the absence of conclusive data, educational decisions ought to be based on assumptions that, if incorrect, will have the least dangerous effect on student outcomes and learning. https://tiescenter.org/resource/SH/Py-il1RbSn3Hb5fMYLZA?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term= TIES Center is the national technical assistance center on inclusive practices and policies. It works with states, districts, and schools to support the movement of students from less inclusive to more inclusive environments.

Contacts

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